

Welcome

Scoping Meeting

West Tennessee Solar Farm Environmental Assessment



Purpose of tonight's meeting

- This Scoping Meeting serves as the official kickoff to the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the West Tennessee Solar Farm project.
- The EA is required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) since the project is receiving federal funding through a U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) grant.
- Through this Scoping Meeting, the State is soliciting public input to the EA process.
- What does scoping mean? It is the process of determining what subjects will be considered and evaluated in an EA.
- Public comments—both verbal and written—that are received during the scoping period will be taken into account when decisions are made about the issues to be analyzed in the EA.



Objectives of Moderator

- Establish respectful and fair environment for all
- Provide public an opportunity to
 - Ask questions about
 - Proposed Solar Farm project
 - NEPA process
 - Make comments/recommendations about
 - Issues to be addressed in the EA
 - How the Project might proceed
- Facilitate the formal comment process:
 - Spoken Comments
 - Sign up at registration table and be called in order
 - Written Comments
 - Submit tonight or later



Agenda

1. Project Presentations

- Paul Detwiler, DOE NEPA Compliance Officer
- Ryan Gooch, TN Energy Policy Director
- Dr. Stacey Patterson, Director of Research Partnerships, UT
- Paula Flowers, Vice President, Genera Energy, LLC
- Steve Allen, TN Department of Transportation (TDOT)

2. Informal Q&A

- Clarification regarding presentations

3. Formal Public Comments

- Written and spoken comments given equal consideration
- People called in order of sign up
- Court reporter records comments for the record



NEPA and State Energy Program Grants

- As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA or the Stimulus Act), Congress appropriated \$3.1 billion for State Energy Programs (SEP), an existing grant program that helps states improve energy efficiency and increase use of renewable energy.
- Tennessee received \$62.5 million under the formula Congress used to allocate the ARRA funding.
- The Department of Energy (DOE) must approve states' energy plans and ensure that the activities they intend to pursue with those funds meet statutory requirements under NEPA, the Davis-Bacon Act, and many others.
- However, states retain significant discretion in how they spend this money, and DOE does not select projects for them.



NEPA and State Energy Program Grants

- Under NEPA, federal agencies must examine reasonable alternatives that meet their purpose and need for action.
- Here, DOE's purpose is to ensure that states spend their formula grants in ways that further the objectives of the ARRA and the statutes creating the SEP program:
 - ARRA objectives:
 - Job creation and preservation
 - Economic recovery
 - Investments in technology and infrastructure
 - Achieved quickly
 - SEP objectives:
 - Increase efficiency in order to reduce costs and consumption of energy
 - Reduce reliance on imported energy
 - Improve energy reliability
 - Reduce environmental impacts of energy use and production
- In light of these purposes, DOE's decision regarding this project would be to withhold funding for it; to provide funding without restriction; or to provide funding if Tennessee mitigates any adverse environmental impacts.

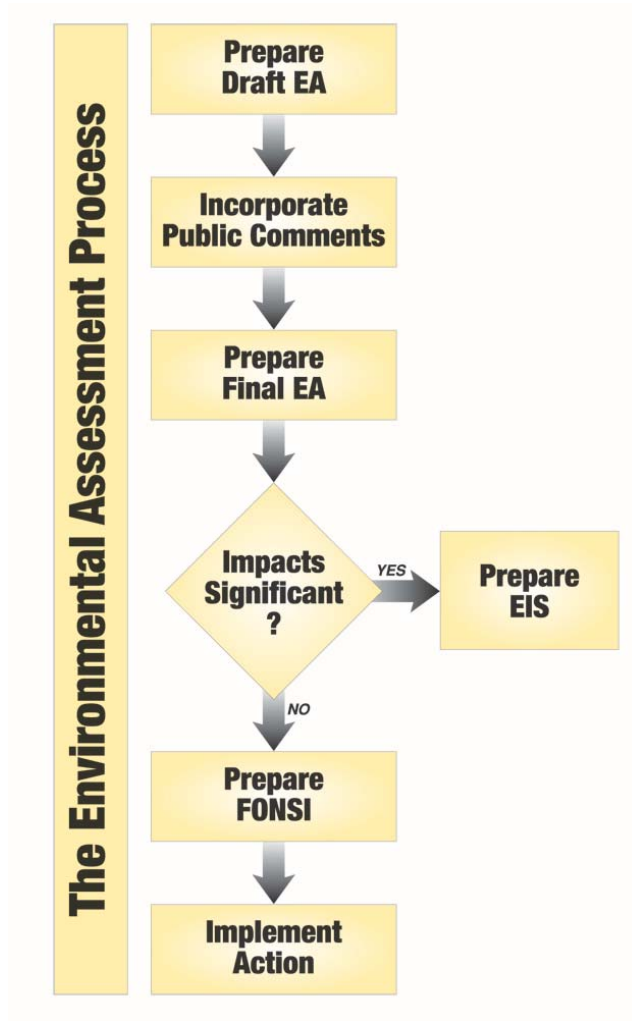


NEPA and State Energy Program Grants

- NEPA allows applicants for federal grants and other actions (for example, federal permits) to prepare environmental assessments (EAs) and submit them to the federal agency.
- Here, Tennessee will prepare the environmental assessment and submit it to Department of Energy (DOE) for acceptance.
- The environmental assessment must meet all of the requirements applicable to one prepared by DOE.
- If DOE accepts the environmental assessment, it will make one of the following decisions based on it:
 - Determine that the project does not have potentially significant impacts, and issue a Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI), allowing the project to proceed.
 - Determine that the project would not have potentially significant impacts if certain mitigation actions were taken, and issue a FONSI with a Mitigation Action Plan (MAP).
 - Determine that the project would have potentially significant impacts that cannot be adequately mitigated, and start preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS).
- DOE makes this decision based solely on its judgment.



The NEPA Environmental Assessment Process



- Based on available information, DOE has determined that this project requires the preparation of an EA to comply with NEPA.
- If the EA indicates there will be no significant impacts, DOE may issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).
- If the EA indicates the project may have significant impacts, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) would be needed.



The NEPA Environmental Assessment Process

- Issues for the West Tennessee Solar Farm EA:
 - Farmland Protection
 - Power Transmission
 - Visual/Noise Impacts
 - Construction Disturbance
 - Socioeconomics
 - Air Quality
 - Cultural Resources
 - Water Resources
 - Hazardous Materials and Waste
 - Cumulative Impacts within the Region
 - Utilities
 - Geology and Soils
 - Transportation
 - Environmental Justice



West Tennessee Solar Farm - Overview

- The Solar Farm is part of Governor Bredesen's Volunteer State Solar Initiative funded by the DOE under the State Energy Program.
- The proposed West Tennessee project includes:
 - The 5 megawatt solar array, which is the focus of this EA,
 - The adjacent Education and Welcome Center that would be developed by TDOT under separate funding.
- The State plans to contract with the University of Tennessee (UT) for the design and installation of the Farm
- UT will own and operate the Farm.

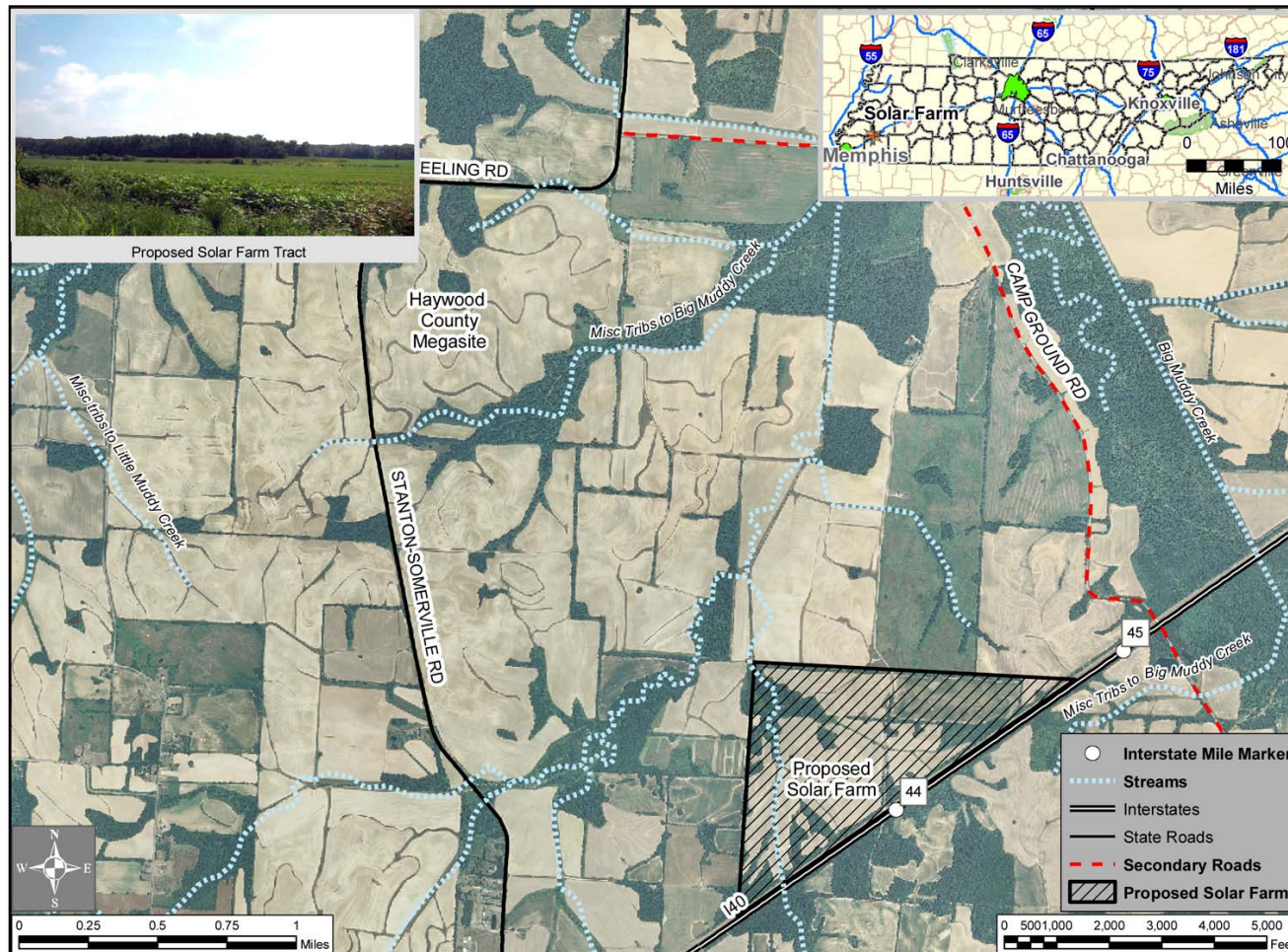


West Tennessee Solar Farm - Overview

- The West Tennessee Solar Farm's purpose and goals include:
 - Demonstrate the zero-carbon production of electricity on a highly visible and significant scale that will create jobs,
 - Educate the public on the benefits of solar energy,
 - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and
 - Increase renewable energy generation.



Proposed Location of West Tennessee Solar Farm



West Tennessee Solar Farm - Project Description

- Detailed design by March 2010
- Anticipated 20+ acres of solar panels
- Approximate 5 MW Array configuration to maximize public education and power generation
- Fixed mount photovoltaic (PV) solar panels
- Demonstration of next generation technologies for solar power generation and energy storage technology

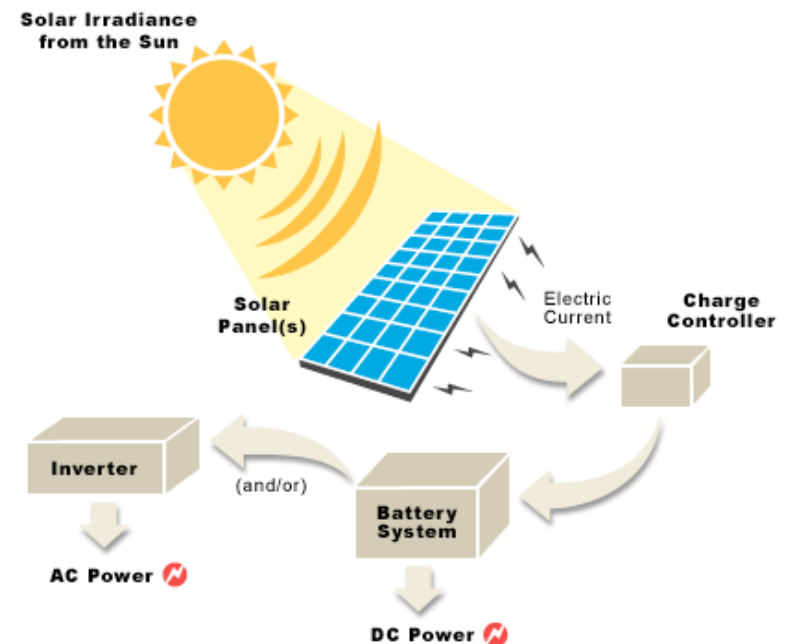


Conceptual Photograph for Discussion Purposes



West Tennessee Solar Farm - Project Description

- 5 MW of electricity will be generated and purchased by TVA for local distribution by Chickasaw Electric Cooperative (CEC).
- Exact route for connectivity will be determined during detailed design.
- Design will seek to provide additional reliability in CEC system loading and line locations.



Education and Welcome Center Description: Roadway Connection & Infrastructure

Two Stage Development

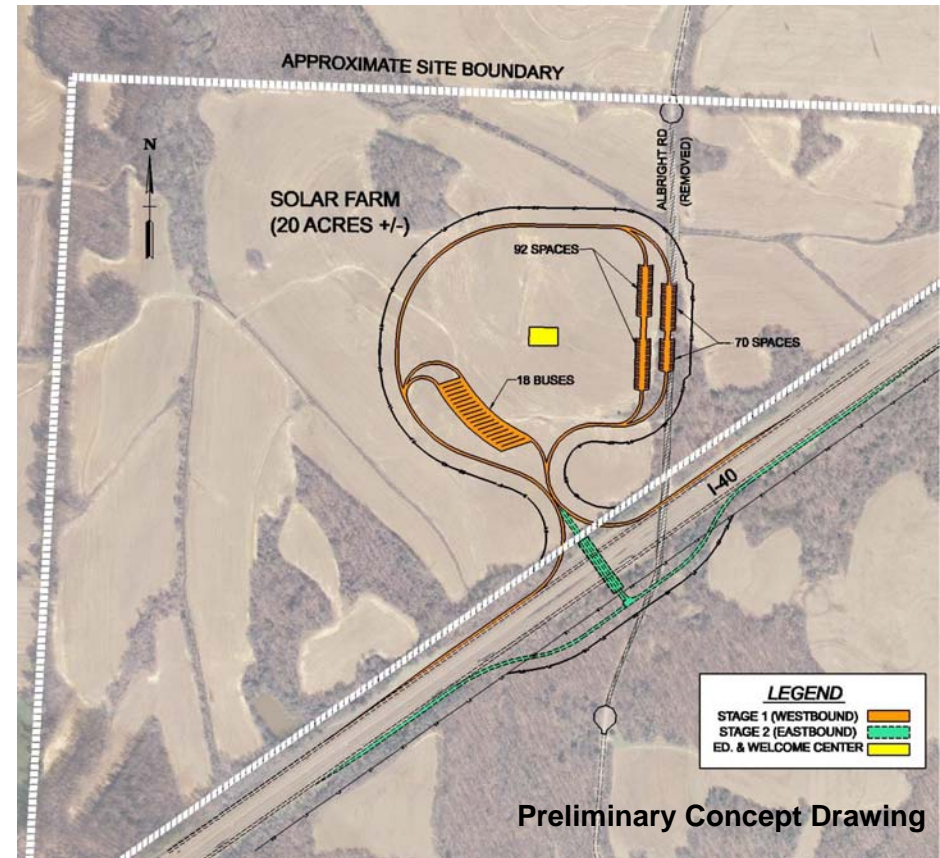
- Stage 1: access for westbound travelers plus site infrastructure. Footprint is 32 +/- acres
- Stage 2: access for eastbound travelers. This work includes a two lane bridge over I-40. Footprint is 2.4 +/- acres

Utilities

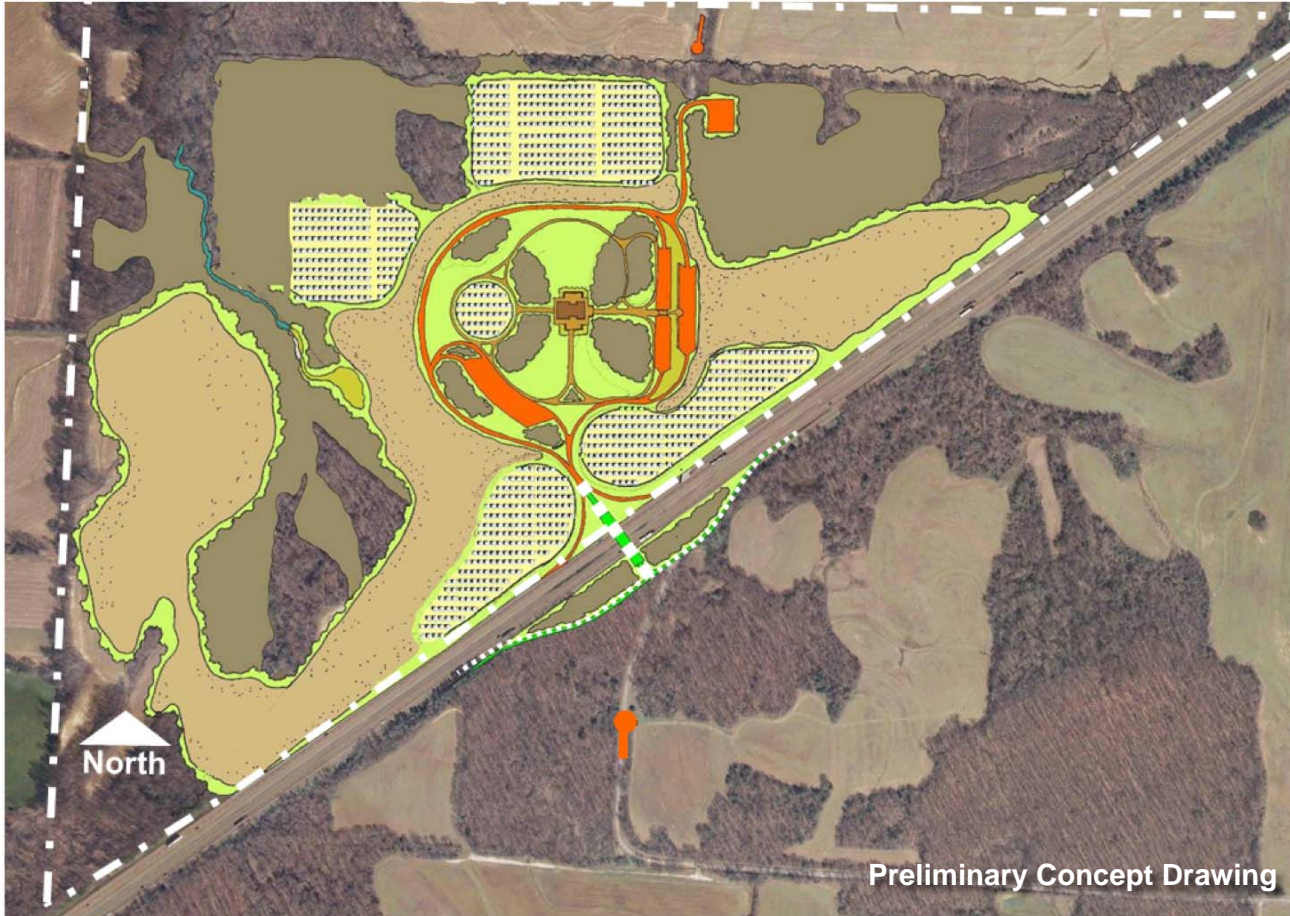
- Traditional connections available near Exit 47
- Opportunities for sustainable design

Albright Road

- Local road and bridge to be removed
- Improved sight lines to education and welcome center



Education and Welcome Center Description: Early Concept of Site Plan



Key Site Features

- 20+ acres solar panels
- Site designed to maximize solar panel viewing
- Interpretive areas included outside of building
- Restored woodlands
- Picnic areas and pathways
- Closed roadway system
- Car parking
- Bus/RV parking



Question & Answer Session



Public Comment Session



To Submit Written Comments

- Please leave written comments at the registration table, or
- Send written comments to:
Ryan Gooch
Department of Economic & Community Development
312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue, 10th Floor
Nashville, TN 37243
1-800-342-1340
ecd.energypolicy@tn.gov

Please comment before December 4, 2009.

